

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3031

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PMIL CI AR
SUBJECT: VISIT OF CHILEAN JUNTA MEMBER AND AIR FORCE CINC LEIGH
TO ARGENTINA

REF: SANTIAGO 3155

1. CHILEAN AIR FORCE CINC AND JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL GUSTAVO LEIGH VISITED ARGENTINA APRIL 18 TO 22, HOSTED BY HIS ARGENTINE COUNTERPART GENERAL ORLANDO AGOSTI. IN ADDITION TO NORMAL CEREMONIES AND EXCHANGE OF DECORATIONS, LEIGH VISITED ARGENTINE AF BASE AND INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES IN CORDOBA, WHERE REPORTEDLY HE WAS INTERESTED IN THE PUCARA LIGHT GROUND-ATTACK AIRCRAFT AND IN ARGENTINE PARACHUTES. ONLY NOTEWORTHY COMMENTS CAME FROM HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE CHILEAN EMBASSY ON APRIL 21.

2. SPEAKING TO DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS, LEIGH SAID "WE BELIEVE THAT PRESENT POLICY OF US IS MISTAKEN AND THAT WHILE THERE IS NO CHANGE, THE NATIONS OF LA MUST UNITE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST THIS DISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDE...". ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL, THE CARTER POLICY AFFECTS ONLY "MINOR COUNTRIES" SUCH AS CHILE, BRAZIL, URUGUAY AND ARGENTINA AND NOT THE IMPORTANT ONES LIKE ENGLAND AND FRANCE. HE WARNED OF NECESSITY TO REVISE RIO TREATY IF US POLICY DID NOT CHANGE, CONCENTRATING UPON NEW ARRANGEMENTS AMONG LA NATIONS, IN FAC OF "AN ANGOLA EMBEDDED IN
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FRONT OF AMERICA."

3. IN TERMS OF ARGENTINE-CHILEAN RELATIONS, LEIGH COMMENTED ON HIS VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF VIDELA, SAYING ALSO HOWEVER THAT VIDELA "GOES RIGHT TO THE BONE." HE DENIED ANY ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE OF OUTCOME OF BEAGLE CHANNEL ARBITRATION, BUT SAID CHILE WOULD RESPECT THE FINDING. HE EXPECTED THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT

PINOCHE TO ARGENTINA IN MAY OR EARLY JUNE. HE DECLINED TO COMMENT UPON SUBVERSION IN ARGENTINA.

4. LEIGH SAW NO CHANCE OF A WAR WITH PERU, AND EMPHASIZED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY AS EVIDENCED BY CURRENT VISIT THERE OF ADMIRAL MERINO. CONVERSATIONS OVER BOLIVIAN OUTLET TO SEA CONTINUE, HE SAID.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILE, LEIGH NOTED THAT STUDY OF RETURN TO DEMOCRACY CONTINUED, BUT HE THOUGHT THAT COUNTRY WOULD RETAIN AUTHORITARIAN, EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT TO FIGHT AGAINST MARXISM. RECENT BAN ON POLITICAL PARTIES DID NOT MEAN MILITARY INTENDED TO PERPETUATE THEMSELVES IN POWER OR THAT POLITICAL ACTIVITY WAS PERMANENTLY OUTLAWED. HE CLAIMED THAT RECENT OUTBREAKS OF ARMED SUBVERSION DID NOT REPRESENT RECOVERY OF SUBVERSION, BUT ONLY INCIDENTS WHICH TAKE PLACE FROM TIME TO TIME. SITUATION IS PERFECTLY UNDER CONTROL, HE CLAIMED. FINALLY, IN REFERENCE TO RECENT RESIGNATION OF MINISTER OF JUSTICE, HE SAID "THERE IS A SECTOR OF THE CHURCH IN CHILE WHICH IS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA. RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL ARE GOOD, BUT TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE MUST NOT BE GIVEN TO THIS (POLITICIZED) SECTOR, AS DID THE FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE."

6. OUR AIR FORCE ATTACHES WHO ATTENDED RECEPTION FOR LEIGH NOTED VERY WARM FEELING OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ARGENTINE AND CHILEAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS.

7. COMMENT: FROM AIR FORCE TO AIR FORCE POINT OF VIEW, VISIT WAS PROBABLY SUCCESS. IN MORE GENERAL TERMS, ARGENTINES DID CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE QUOTED PUBLICLY IN JOINING LEIGHT'S COMMENTS ON US.
HILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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